

Coggeshall Community Action Group
FACTSHEET ON HONYWOOD PROJECT 24th August 2014

In April 2014 Honywood School and Marks Hall Estate announced The Honywood Project:

- Marks Hall Estate will make available 26 acres of agricultural land, south of the A120 between Tilkey Road and the present school, to build 300 houses, a 5 acre light industrial estate and a new school for the same number of pupils as the existing school. The existing school will be demolished. The total development area of 45 acres is collectively owned by Marks Hall Estate, Essex County Council, Ardencrest Ltd (i.e. the Co-op) and the Potter family.
- Road access to the new light industrial estate, school and houses would be via a new road joining the Colne Road with a new roundabout about 75m south of the A120/ B1024 junction.
- Marks Hall Estate will lease a further 15 acres of agricultural land north of the A120 to the new school for use as school playing fields - accessible from the school by a new footbridge crossing the A120.
- Discussions with Marks Hall Estate and Honywood School suggest that of the estimated £30m sale proceeds due to Marks Hall, it will retain only £5m (1/6th of the proceeds) and donate £25m to fund the school rebuild.

Why CCAG believes that you should be concerned

- The population of Coggeshall would increase by about 20%. No information on additional community facilities, such as an NHS surgery, drainage, sewerage, traffic volumes and management has been provided.
- Marks Hall Estate is a registered Charity managing land left to the nation set up to promote agriculture, arboriculture and forestry; it is neither a general trust nor a charitable educational trust. The board of trustees is self-selected then approved by DEFRA. Trustees are not accountable (unlike many other charities) to members, patrons or the local community in any way. There is little public evidence that the charity has considered fully other options to raise money. The trust made a small profit in 2013.
- Marks Hall Estate is a charity and appears to be planning to give away approximately £25m of proceeds raised from sale of its land. These are assets left to the nation. The Charity Commission has been contacted by local residents, Priti Patel MP, CCAG, CAUSE (Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex), CPRE Essex and the Colne – Stour Countryside Association requesting a review of the charity's proposal.
- CCAG and many residents, pupils, and parents do not believe that a new school is required. Priti Patel has met with the school twice and agrees. The latest OFSTED report does not consider the school buildings to be inadequate.
- Lack of engagement with the community. Marks Hall Estate has given minimal feedback to the community and has removed comments from its Facebook page. Honywood School has given no feedback to the community (other than via their internal newsletter) subsequent to the 23rd May 2014 posting on the school website by the school Governors. The Highways Agency has offered to 'engage' with the school but the offer has not been taken up.

This is really happening!

- At a meeting with Marks Hall Estate on 2nd June 2014, Melville Dunbar Associates (urban planners for the Honywood Project), announced that it had been instructed to proceed with preparing the Planning Application.

WITHOUT ACTION FROM THOSE WHO LIVE IN COGGESHALL THIS PROPOSAL WILL GO AHEAD.

For information on how you can have your say visit:

<http://www.coggeshallcommunityactiongroup.com/>